Comprehension Interventions 1

Running Head: Comprehension Interventions

Collaborative Strategic Reading and Transactional Strategies

Approach to Comprehension Instruction: Comprehension Interventions

Kettely M. DeJesus

Brooklyn College

Running Head: Comprehension Interventions

Comprehension Interventions 2

Abstract

A significant number of students enter the upper-elementary and middle school grades with deficits in their ability to read and comprehend text. Evidence suggests that the literacy skills of many high school graduates are insufficient for success in the work place and society. There is concern that these students have passed the age when reading skills can most easily be gained, and that their reading deficits have become resistant to remediation by the time they reach the upper elementary grades. (Francis, Shaywitz, Stuebing, Shaywitx, & Fletcher, 1996). This is a literature review of studies and articles surrounding the issue of comprehension interventions for upper elementary and middle school students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. It is also a review of strategies recommended by researchers and practitioners to improve literacy and comprehension beyond elementary school. The research also compares the efficacy of Collaborative Strategic Reading, a reading comprehension strategy which combines cooperative learning and reading strategy instruction and Transactional Strategies Instruction. It is also a consideration when and how comprehension interventions should take place and what obstacles teachers may come face when attempting to implement the strategies. Finding enough studies that specifically focus on the CSR and TSI method was problematic as these methods are specific to comprehension. Studies have concluded that: (a) Students require comprehension intervention strategies throughout upper and middle school, (b) There is evidence of the benefits of a comprehensive, supplemental reading comprehension intervention for older students, (c) CSR is a feasible and effective practice that can be readily integrated into reading, content-area instruction with positive impact (d) Intervention was much more effective for some students than others, (e) School districts need to make comprehension intervention a priority in reading as well as content-area subjects such as social studies and science, (f) providing on going professional development opportunities for teachers to learn how to teach literacy and comprehension will help meet the needs of the most needed students.

Running Head: Comprehension Interventions

Comprehension Interventions 3

Selection of review material

In order to select which research to review, the selection criteria used was only peer reviewed journals with studies dates within the last five years. Several data bases were accessed including ERIC and other internet sources. The majority of material was found through Brooklyn College Library online databases, using key word searches, in order to ensure that as many studies were reviewed as possible.

Introduction

Social constructivist theorists view young children as active participants in the learning process. Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget described ‘learning as a socially defined activity.’ Luke, Dooley and Woods (2011), defines comprehension as a pragmatic social and intellectual practice. John Dewey (1910) described comprehension as a “thinking process for seeking meaning when there is lack of understanding, perplexity or absence of sense. Comprehension is all about making connections with text. Collaborative Strategic Reading and Transactional Strategies Approach to Comprehension Instruction not only improve student comprehension, but also provide opportunities for interactive dialogue between students and between teachers.

Running Head: Comprehension Interventions

Comprehension Interventions 4

**What Works: Reading Comprehension Interventions for Upper- Elementary and Middle School Students.**

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), approximately two thirds of 8th and 12th grade students read at less than the “proficient” level. Nearly 32% of high school graduates are not adequately prepared for college-level English composition courses (Brozo, 2009). Although some primary students begin middle school at grade level or near grade level, by the time they enter into middle school, they fall behind (Palumbo, et al., 2009). Students must practice reading to improve reading and reading comprehension, yet as they struggle to read more complex text, adolescents become less interested and less motivated to read. Avoidance of reading eventually results in even greater challenges (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007). Borzo (2009) reports that the demands of a secondary school curriculum does not help, it require students to possess sophisticated language tools to explore information in content-area subjects. According to Vaughn, Klingner, Swanson, Boardman Roberts, Mohammed and Spisak (2011), “National studies have revealed that significant numbers of adolescents do not adequately understand complex text, which impedes their secondary success, access to postsecondary learning and opportunities in the work environment. As these students struggle with reading and reading comprehension, strategies to assist them in comprehension of increasingly complex content-area text, need to on par with the student’s needs. Burns, Hodgson, Parker and Fremont (2011) discovered that although research found that teaching explicit strategies improved comprehension skills, however in middle and high schools the effect decreased from 1.11 middle school students to .59 among students in high school. Students need literacy and reading comprehension interventions in their content-area subject classrooms. What can be done to improve reading comprehension in students in middle school?

Running Head: Comprehension Interventions

**Comprehension Interventions 5**

What is comprehension? Simply, comprehension is “understanding and learning from text (Kim, Vaughn, Klingner, Woodruff, Klein and Kouzekanami, 2006). Reading is not reading, unless the author’s message has been clearly conveyed to the reader. According to Therrien, Wickstrom and Jones (2006), “in order to achieve comprehension, students need to blend skills and knowledge in two broad areas.” Students engage in lower-order processes, such as fluency and decoding. They also engage in higher-order processes to construct an overall understanding of the text. These processes include the ability to integrate information contained in words, sentences and paragraphs of a passage (Therrien, et al. 2006). Reading requires a set of skills. Improving comprehension scores for struggling students requires improving their decoding ability, vocabulary knowledge, fluency, world knowledge, and subject knowledge. Comprehension is knowledge dependent (Hirsch, 2010). In other words, prior knowledge has a powerful effect on actual reading ability. Background knowledge is required to understand text. According to Palumbo and Loiacono (2009), background or prior knowledge is essential. “Students who are familiar with a subject learn new material in that subject more quickly than students who do not possess the same depth of knowledge and background understanding.” There is a growing body of research that supports the best method of instruction to help middle school students who are struggling to understand what they read (Flanigan & Greenwood, 2007). Looking at studies that research what is known about specific types of comprehension strategies that work best, and when and how these approaches should be provided, is the basis of this review.

Many studies considered the efficacy of text previewing and preteaching of keywords as small group reading comprehension intervention strategies. Burns, Hodgson, Parker and Fremont (2011), focused on small group reading and reading comprehension interventions that are so prevalent in schools today. In their study, Burns, etal (2011) found that previewing strategies and preteaching keywords has a significant effect on the comprehension, and preteaching keywords was more efficient than previewing. The treatments in the studies were two intervention programs of specific reading strategies called Collaborative Strategic Reading

Running Head: Comprehension Interventions

**Comprehension Interventions 6**

(CSR) and Transactional Strategies Approach to Comprehension Instruction (TCI). CSR was first introduced by University of Texas at Austin, the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (Vaughn & Bryant, 1998). CSR involved targeting specific skills for developing content-area comprehension. Using CSR provides students ample opportunities to use CSR to learn the content of content-area (Kim, Vaughn, Klingner, Woodruff, Reutebuch, and Kouzekanani, 2006). Students applied skills such as ‘click and clunk, get the gist, and wrap-up. In addition to measuring the impact of the proposed interventions, researchers sought student perceptions of their personal use of strategies and whether the student believed the strategies assisted in their reading comprehension. In her article, Brown (2008) asserted that teachers might use ‘the gradual release of responsibility. Teachers take time to explain and model strategies, and in time ‘fades’ as students demonstrate that they can use the strategy with less support. While some educators stress that reading a broad range of non fiction, informational text, is a primary aid to reading comprehension, still, researcher Yan (2010) found that strategic reading instruction should be taught explicitly. Reading strategy instruction provides an efficient method for teachers to motivate students’ participation in their learning and teach them how to read effectively (Yan, 2010).

A team of researchers did a study to determine the effects of Collaborative Strategic Reading on a group of middle schools students (Vaughn. Klingner, Swanson, Boardman, Roberts, Mohammed and Stillman-Spisak (2011). Students were randomly assigned to classes and then classes were randomly assigned to treatment or business-as-usual comparison groups. Findings indicated significant differences in favor of the treatment students on reading comprehension, but not in reading fluency.

References

Berkeley, S., Marshak, L., Mastropieri, M.A. and Scruggs, T.E. (2011). Improving Student Comprehension of Social Studies Text: A Self-Questioning Strategy for Inclusive Middle Schools Classes*. Remedial and Special Education, 32* (2), 105–113*.*

Blanton, W., Wood, K., Taylor, D., (2007). Rethinking Middle School Reading Instruction: A Basic Literacy Activity, *Reading Psychology 28.* 75-95.

Boyd, M., Rubin, D. (2006). How Contingent Questioning Promotes Extended Students Talk: A Function of Display Questions: *Journal of Literacy Research, 38* (2) 141-169.

Brown, R. (2008). The Road Not Yet Taken: A Transactional Strategies Approach to Comprehension Instruction. *The Reading Teacher, 61* (7) 538-547

Burns, M., Hodgson, J., Parker, D.C., Fremont, K., (2011). Comparison of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Text Previewing and Preteaching Keywords as Small-Group Reading Comprehension Strategies with Middle-School Students. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 50* (3), 241-252.

Diliberto, J., Beattie, J., Flowers, C., Algozzine, R., (2009) Effects of Teaching Syllable Skills Instruction on Reading Achievement in Struggling Middle School Readers. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 48,* 14-27.

Fan, Y., (2010) The Effect of Comprehension Strategy Instruction on EFL Learners’ Reading Comprehension *Asian Social Science, 6* (8), 19-29.

Flanigan, K., Greenwood, S., (2007). Effective content vocabulary instruction in the middle: Matching Students, purposes, words, and strategies. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 51* (3), 226 -238.

Hirsch, E., (2011). Beyond Comprehension: We Have Yet to Adopt a Common Core Curriculum That Builds Knowledge Grade by Grade – But We Need To. *American Educator* 30-36

Hitchcock, J.H., Kurki, A., Wilkins, C., Dimno, J., Gersten, R. (2009). Evaluating the Collaborative Strategic Reading Intervention: An Overview of Randomized Controlled Trial Options. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation* *14* (2)*,* 1-12.

Hitchcock, J., Kurki, A., Wilkins, C., Dimino, J., Gersten, R., (2011). The Impact of Collaborative

Strategic Reading on the Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Students in Linguistically Diverse Schools *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation 14* (2).

Kim, A., Vaughn, S., Klingner, J., Woodruff, A., Reutebuch, C., Kouzekanani, K. (2006) Improving the Reading Comprehension of Middle School Students with Disabilities Through Computer-Assisted Collaborative Strategic Reading, *Remedial and Special Education 27* (4), 235-249.

Klingner, J., Vaughn, S., Arguelles, M., Hughes, M, Leftwich, S, (2004). Collaborative Strategic Reading: “Real-World” Lessons From Classroom Teachers, *Remedial and Special Education 25*, (5) 291-302.

Luke, A., Dooley, K., Woods, A., (2011) Comprehension and content: Planning literacy in low

socioeconomic and culturally diverse schools. *The Australian Association for Research in Education* Reading. *Intervention in School and Clinic 34* (5), 284-292.

Manset-Williamson, G., Dunn, M., Hinshaw, R., Nelson, J.M. (2008). The Impact of Self-Questioning Strategy Use on the Text-Reader Assisted Comprehension of Students With Reading Disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education 23* (1), 123-135.

Manset-Williamson, Nelson, J., (2005) Balanced, Strategic Reading Instruction for Upper-Elementary and Middle School Students with Reading Disabilities: A Comparative Study of Two Approaches. *Learning Disability Quarterly 28* (2) 59-74

O’Brien, D., Beach, R., Scharber, C., (2007). “Struggling” Middle Schoolers: Engagement and Literate Competence in a Reading Writing Intervention Class, *Reading Psychology 28,* 51-73

Palumbo, A., Loiacono, V., (2009) Understanding the Causes of Intermediate And Middle School Comprehension Problems.  *International Journal of Special Education 24* (1), 75-81.

Schorzman, E., Cheek, E.H. (2004). Structured Strategy Instruction: Investigating an Intervention for Improving Sixth-graders’ Reading Comprehension. *Reading Psychology*, (25) 37-60.

Therrien, W., Wickstrom, Jones, K., (2006). Effect of a Combined Repeated Reading and Question Generation Intervention on Reading Achievement. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 21* (2), 89-97.

Vaughn, S., Bryant, D. (2002) Reading Comprehension Interventions That Enhance Outcomes for English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities 1-8. *Special Education Programs*

Vaughn, S. Klingner, J.K., (1999). Teaching Reading Comprehension Through Collaborative Strategic Palumbo, A., Loiacono, V., (2009) Understanding the Causes of Intermediate And Middle School Comprehension Problems.  *International Journal Of Special Education 24* (1), 75-81.

Vaughn, S., Klingner, J.K. and Bryant, D.P. (2001). Collaborative Strategic Reading as a Means to Enhance Peer- Mediated Instruction for Reading Comprehension and Content-Area Learning. *Remedial and Special Education, 22* (2), 66-74.

Vaughn, S., Klingner, J., Swanson, E., Boardman, A., Roberts, G., Mohammed, S., Stillman-Spisak, S. (2011). Efficacy of Collaborative Strategic Reading With Middle School Students. *American Educational Research Journal, 48* (4), 938-964.

Zoghi, M., Mustapha, R., Rizan T.N., Maasum, M. (2010). Collaborative Strategic Reading with University EFL Learners. *Journal of College Reading and Learning,* *41* (1).